

It is called "Captain Kidd's Millions," and treats of that well-known character from a different point of view to that generally taken. The writer makes good use of the feeling that everyone has experienced at some time or other—namely, the consciousness of pre-existence or "the having been there before,"—a curious psychological state the study of which has always been a favourite subject both with poets and medical men. Henry Vaughan, who was both, and Rossetti, in the lines—

"I have been here before,  
But when or how I cannot tell;  
I know the grass beyond the door,  
The sweet, keen smell,  
The sighing sound, the lights around the shore"—

have treated of this state. The whole matter was handled in a masterly way by Sir James Crichton-Browne in his Cavendish Lecture.<sup>1</sup> Another feature of the story is a most vivid picture of Execution Dock. The lower reaches of the Thames were not thickly populated in the eighteenth century, otherwise we might speculate on the dangers to health which would arise from the presence of so many putrefying bodies hanging in open air, even though, as in the "Fairchild Family," the sight of them served as correctives to the hasty tempers of youth.

## New Inventions.

### A DILATING URETHRAL BOUGIE.

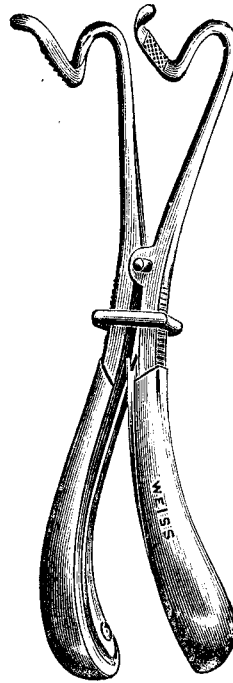
THE favourable experience which I have had of the dilating bougie now described induces me to bring it under the notice of my medical brethren. It is made of whalebone and is about 35 cm. (14 in.) long. The slender extremity A B measures about 12 cm. (4½ in.) in length, and is as thin as an ordinary bougie with a bulb-shaped point; this portion may be either bent (*coudée*) or twisted so as to more easily enter a stricture, and may be called the guide. The dilating part of the bougie, where it gradually increases in diameter until the full thickness is reached, is at B C, and is about 3 cm. (1¼ in.) long. The remainder of the instrument is of uniform diameter and measures about 20 cm. (8 in.) in length; this part is made in three different sizes corresponding to Nos. 2, 3, and 5 of the English scale, the guide being of almost the same diameter in all three sizes. Guides are adapted to various other instruments, such as catheters, stricture dilators, urethrotomes, &c., and when they are made of whalebone they are not different from those of my dilating bougie; but in those instruments the guide generally forms a continuation of a metallic tube or rod, an arrangement which is deficient in flexibility and has the further disadvantage that the instrument does not always follow the guide when the stricture is very difficult. If made in elastic gum the guide bends as soon as it comes in contact with an obstruction and is too flexible to pass through difficult strictures. As the dilating bougie is made entirely of whalebone the flexibility of the guide diminishes gradually, and there are no abrupt thickenings such as are found in some cases where the guide is attached to metal. Consequently when the guide has passed through a difficult stricture the dilating part B C must necessarily follow. An experience of more than eleven years has convinced me of the advantages of this bougie in the dilatation of difficult strictures.

Rome.

DR. NATALE AMICI.

### THE "MAMMOTH-TUSK" GAG FOR SENILE AND EDENTULOUS JAWS.

ALL the gags I have hitherto met with are very prone to slip, thus embarrassing the operator and often seriously deteriorating his results. Messrs. Weiss and Son, of 287, Oxford-street, W., have kindly made for me the instrument here depicted, which I find most valuable for tongue and mouth operations generally; specially so, however, when the jaws are senile and edentulous. It is the familiar Ferguson's gag with a slight modification consisting in a prolongation of the prongs, which are also curved outwards at an obtuse angle and bevelled. When in position they lie—sheathed, of course, with vulcanite—on the inner aspect of the gum, and cannot well slide off until deftly removed. The instrument must be introduced with the handle in a line with the patient's neck, then rotated until the latter is at right angles to the trunk, and the jaws prised open, being extracted by a repetition of the same manœuvre. The head, if not over the table edge, should be turned on one side, the handle of the



gag lying on the uppermost cheek. A remote suggestion of the recurvation in the mammoth's tusks explains the choice of title.

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### THE PROPOSED NEW PORTSMOUTH HOSPITAL.—

A most promising beginning was made at Portsmouth on Friday with the scheme which has been discussed for some weeks for the erection of new hospital accommodation as a commemoration of the longest reign in English history. The meeting was called by the Mayor (Mr. G. E. Couzens) and was most representative in every sense; the mayor mentioned that the foundation stone of the present institution was laid by the late Prince Consort. Sir John Baker, M.P., the senior representative of the borough, moved a resolution favouring the erection of a new block of wards "in view of the general enlargement and improvement of the institution," and promised £500. Alderman Sir William King seconded and offered £100. Before the meeting ended nearly £2500 was subscribed, the mayor giving £250. As the present accommodation for males is but 32 beds—16 for regular and 16 for casual patients—it is probable the new wing will be for males.

THE SOUTHAMPTON SLUM SCHEME.—After some trouble the Southampton Corporation have acquired the property on the condemned area which by special Act of Parliament they intend to clear. The claims made for compensation totalled £42,088, which sum has been reduced by arbitration to £28,762, a difference of £13,326. The area first to be cleared—that between Simnel-street, Pepper-alley, Blue Anchor-lane, and the Old Walls—it will be necessary to replace with sufficient buildings to accommodate 250 persons of the working-classes before the remainder of the area is cleared. Mr. Harris, the medical officer of health, has put forward a scheme for this re-erection which includes a municipal common lodging-house upon the lines of the Rowton lodging-houses in London, modified to suit the purse of the Southampton Corporation. A rough estimate by the borough surveyor puts the cost of such a house to accommodate 240 single men in separate cubicles at £8500. As to artisans' dwellings, those recently erected by the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway Company in St. John's Wood are suggested as patterns. A building containing twenty sets of these flat tenements would, it is thought, cost £5000 and produce (at 5s. 6d. weekly each) an annual rental of £286. An Elizabethan house has unfortunately been condemned, but efforts are being made to preserve an ancient vault in Simnel-street.

<sup>1</sup> THE LANCET, July 6th and 13th, 1896.